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By- Dillavou, George J.

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A study to present a history of the Swarthmore Chautauqua as an adult education enterprise was conducted by investigating documents from many sources previously gathered for a review of the life of the Swarthmore Chautauqua. Several tape-recorded personal interviews were used to add to the documentation, and visits were made to towns where the Chautauqua played for the purpose of reading the reviews and talking to persons who attended the Chautauqua between 1912 and 1930. The study found that changes in the social climate of the United States that were brought about by World War I were soon reflected in the fortunes of circuit Chautauqua. It rose to its peak in attendance and profits in the early 1920's and began to decline as a marked influence on American life by 1925. The availability of other forms of education and entertainment brought about a decline in attendance and ticket sales, and by 1926, the Swarthmore Chautauqua was in decline. One conclusion from this study was that the life cycle of the Swarthmore Chautauqua demonstrates the episodic nature of institutions of adult education. (CH)

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THE SWARTHMORE CHAUTAUQUA

March 1968

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HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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George J. Dillavou

Department of Education
The University of Chicago

Chicago, Illinois

March 1968

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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INTRODUCTION

The original hypothesis of the writer was that the Swarthmore Chautauqua was an important adult education enterprise created and managed by Paul M. Pearson that was a significant part of the circuit Chautauqua movement in the United States between 1903 and 1930. It was further felt that the Swarthmore Chautauqua was somewhat set apart from the other circuit Chautauquas by an added stress on the education of adults that was missing from the other circuits. It appeared as if the motives of Paul Pearson were different from the other owners and managers of circuit Chautauquas and that as a result the calibre of his Swarthmore Chautauqua was higher than that of the others.

The study began by posing several questions:

1. What factors in the social, economic, and educational environment gave rise to the creation of the Swarthmore Chautauqua?
2. What needs did the Swarthmore Chautauqua meet?
3. Did the institution constantly reassess the needs that gave rise to the founding, and are they still operative?
4. Were the objectives of the institution at the time of its founding still relevant at the time of its maturity?
5. Did scientific, technological, and educational advances overtake the institution at such a rate that it could not respond satisfactorily to the changes?
6. Could the institution adjust to these changes so as to survive, or did it have to be abandoned?
7. How did the personality of the owner-manager, Paul M. Pearson, affect the growth and later the death of the Swarthmore Chautauqua?

The literature of the three different kinds of Chautauqua--the Mother Chautauqua (The Chautauqua Institution), the "little" Chautauquas (permanently based in towns throughout the country), and the circuit Chautauquas (operating out of large brown tents) --is at best superficial and consists largely of the written memories of the founder of Chautauqua, John Heyl Vincent, and the memories of those who appeared on the circuits during the early decades of the twentieth century. Historians have been strangely silent about Chautauqua, yet it was an important part of the social, educational, and cultural pattern of American life from the turn of the century until 1930.

The purpose of this investigator has been to examine the extant literature and to add to it by an in-depth study of one of the circuit Chautauquas, the Swarthmore Chautauqua Association. The study did not attempt to study all circuit Chautauquas. The author was intrigued by the words of C. Hartley Grattan who stated

> When the great shakedown came late in the twenties, three organizations dominated the dying field: the Redpath (the pioneer, named for the old lecture bureau which Vawter controlled), the Swarthmore, and the Community. Of these historians consider the Swarthmore to have been quite the best.[1] (Italics the investigator's.)

The italicized statement sent the investigator off on a period of research that has culminated in this document.

That Chautauqua was an important part of the American scene can scarcely be denied, even if judged only by the number of Americans who attended each year. It eventually reached into approximately 5,000 towns and villages each year, and in 1925 the total aggregate attendance was reported at 35,449,750.[2]

Yet, within a period of less than five years the circuit Chautauqua movement passed totally from American life. The writer has attempted to assess the causes of the demise of circuit Chautauqua, especially as it was reflected specifically in the Swarthmore Chautauqua.

William S. Griffith has proposed a growth model for adult education institutions,[3] and this model was found useful in studying the Swarthmore Chautauqua as it developed after its inception into a mature enterprise.

The end result has been a study that suggests the remarkable abilities of one man, Paul M. Pearson, to build a viable institution, largely through the force of his character, that was not really markedly different from the other circuit Chautauquas in programming or content, but which was considered superior largely because of his reputation. That the institution was unable to survive when social, educational, political, and technological changes occurred perhaps also indicates that it did not basically differ from its counterparts.

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[1] C. Hartley Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge (New York: Association Press, 1955), p. 180.

[2] Swarthmore Chautauqua Association Weekly News Letter (Swarthmore, Penn.), April 10, 1926, p. 1.

[3] William S. Griffith, "A Growth Model of Institutions of Adult Education (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Education, University of Chicago, 1963.

METHODS

The investigation began in the State University of Iowa Library, where the complete records and files of the Redpath Chautauquas are housed. Because of the special relationship between Paul Pearson and Harry Harrison, who headed the Chicago office of the Redpath Chautauquas, these files proved invaluable, as they contained the originals of hundreds of letters written by Paul Pearson to Harry Harrison. Harrison and Pearson were personal friends, as well as business associates, and many details of the operation of the Swarthmore Chautauqua are discussed in the correspondence that would not otherwise have been available. In addition to the originals of the Pearson letters and memoranda, the carbon copies of Harrison's replies are also filed there.

The investigator spent many days going through the Redpath files and had Xerox copies made of what seemed pertinent to the purpose of this study.

After assimilating the data found in Iowa, the writer then began a series of personal, tape-recorded interviews with people who had known and who had worked with Paul Pearson and his Chautauqua. He began with Drew Pearson, Paul Pearson's son, who had worked with his father during the formative years of the Chautauqua as a tent boy and later as a lecturer on his father's circuits. The other two surviving children, Barbara Pearson Lange and Ellen Pearson Fogg, were also interviewed, as well as men and women who had worked for the Swarthmore Chautauqua Association, a member of the Board of Managers of the Association, and faculty colleagues during the days when Paul Pearson taught at Swarthmore College. The writer also interviewed the author of a book on circuit Chautauqua, Miss Victoria Case, and talked extensively with Mr. George Ivins, who was Superintendent of Education in the Virgin Islands during the period when Paul Pearson was the Governor.

The writer also located several documents that had not previously been made available to anyone. Paul Pearson's journals were found in an old theatrical trunk stored in a farmhouse owned by Drew Pearson. These journals had not been opened since the death of Paul Pearson in 1938. Other members of the family located scrapbooks and other documents that had long lain unread.

The Board of Managers of Swarthmore College also granted permission to Xerox any reference to Paul Pearson and his Chautauqua that was contained in the minutes of the Board of Managers during the period from 1912 to 1930.

The United States District Court in Philadelphia located the papers concerning the bankruptcy proceedings of Paul Pearson and permitted them to be Xeroxed and given to the writer.

Various towns throughout the territory in which the Swarthmore Chautauqua operated were picked at random from the Pearson journals, and the author visited towns in New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey and read newspaper accounts of the Swarthmore Chautauqua's performances. These newspaper accounts tended to assume a sameness from one town to the next that provided little real help in the research, but the investigator could not ignore at the start the possibility that newspaper accounts might turn up valuable information.

Periodicals of the period were checked and read and often proved valuable sources of information about the Swarthmore Chautauqua and Paul Pearson.

The social, political, and educational history of the era also seemed important in understanding the climate in which the Chautauqua operated, and the writer read widely in the literature that deals with American life from 1900 to 1930.

When the material had been gathered, the writer began the task of evaluating the data and drawing the conclusions from them.

RESULTS

The Founding of the Swarthmore Chautauqua

Paul Pearson first appeared on the Chautauqua platform in 1895 at Palmer Lake, Colorado. He had invented the "lecture-recital," an inspirational lecture combined with the reading of poetry, for which he received some acclaim. He continued to give these "lecture-recitals" during most of his life.

One day in 1911, as he was waiting to take his place on the platform in Marion, Ohio, the thought occurred to him that circuit Chautauqua had spread throughout the western part of the United States but that it had never been brought to the East Coast. At the time he was a professor of public speaking at Swarthmore College, and when he returned to the campus he talked to several of his Quaker friends and inspired them to form The Chautauqua Association of Pennsylvania, capitalized at $10,000. During the winter of 1911 and the spring of 1912 Paul Pearson put together a circuit, and the Chautauqua opened at Chestertown, Maryland, on June 10, 1912. The circuit had twenty-three towns. A second circuit of eighteen towns opened on August 26, 1912.

Circuit, or travelling, Chautauqua was the brainchild of Keith Vawter and J. Roy Ellison in 1903. They had conceived the idea of setting up large tents in a series of towns along a railroad track and moving lecturers and entertainers from one town to another by train so that each town would be served by five or

seven days of Chautauqua before the tent was struck and moved eight towns down the line for another series. It was on this same plan that Paul Pearson built his Swarthmore Chautauqua.

From the beginning the formal title, The Chautauqua Association of Pennsylvania, was seldom used, and in 1919 the Board of Managers reincorporated as The Swarthmore Chautauqua Association in deference to the public who had always referred to the Chautauqua as The Swarthmore Chautauqua.

The First Year

1912 proved to be an "educational" and "cultural" success for the Chautauqua, but it was something of a financial disaster. At year's end the books showed a deficit of $22,000, or $12,000 more than the entire capital stock. Paul Pearson went to his Board of Managers, and they agreed that the advantages of the Chautauqua outweighed the financial burden to them, and they agreed to continue.

The program for the first year was similar to programs being given by other circuit Chautauquas throughout the country. Paul Pearson presented a band concert on the opening day and followed it with lecturers, a glee club, a Hungarian orchestra, and a variety company. He himself appeared on the program with his "lecture-recital," and for the first year only the two circuits closed at the end of the sixth day rather than the seventh.

The Early Years

The second year of operation was something of a financial success. At the end of the year the deficit stood at $321, a significant reduction, and from this point on, the Swarthmore Chautauqua was assured of its continuance.

Paul Pearson was an innovator after he founded the Chautauqua. No Chautauqua had ever dared to offer plays in the small towns, but Paul Pearson worked carefully with the ministers of the towns he served and convinced them that religious drama had a place in Chautauqua. After religious drama for a short period, secular drama took its place on the platform, but for the life of all circuit Chautauquas the plays that were presented were carefully selected so as not to offend even the most fastidious. Eventually the pattern in Chautauqua drama settled into a classic pattern of the poor, but honest, hero and heroine fighting against forces of evil and winning in the last act.

Another innovation of Paul Pearson was the Junior Chautauqua. Pearson employed young ladies from Swarthmore College to

accompany the Chautauqua to the towns and stay for the entire run. These young ladies took charge of the children in the town, organized them into morning classes, taught them handicraft, took them on nature walks, and organized a children's pageant that was presented on the last day of Chautauqua. She also accompanied them in a body to the afternoon performance and attempted to keep them quiet and to control their fidgeting so that they would not annoy the talent or the audience.

During the first three years of its operation the Swarthmore Chautauqua finished the season with a deficit. In 1915, for the first time, it showed a profit of $34,093. It had, by this time, expanded into three circuits and was reaching 250 towns. (See Table I.)

The Mature Years

As Paul Pearson became more knowledgeable about the operation of a circuit Chautauqua he observed that it was economically feasible to keep the talent employed for more than the short summer season by offering fall and winter Chautauqua. He developed what he named Festivals and offered them on a three-day basis after the summer season had ended. Since weather was an important factor during the fall and winter, he operated the Festivals in high school auditoriums, firehouses, warehouses, theatres, churches--any place that would accommodate a sizeable crowd. He was then able to keep his platform superintendents, Junior Leaders, and talent under contract on a yearly basis, an advantage to both him and the employees. (See Table I.)

The Swarthmore Chautauqua was inextricably bound up with Swarthmore College because of Paul Pearson's connection with it and his residence in Swarthmore. He drew most of his staff from the student body of the college, and he attracted superior men and women of high morals and integrity who were extremely loyal to him personally.

Finances plagued Paul Pearson during his entire career with the Swarthmore Chautauqua, and he was the first owner-manager to convince bankers that his signed contracts with the towns for the next season could be deposited as collateral to guarantee the loans that he needed to operate the Chautauqua. Later other owner-managers of circuit Chautauquas adopted this practice, and it became common to use the signed contracts as collateral in financial transactions.

The biggest financial burden of the circuit Chautauqua was the railroads. The tents were shipped from town to town as baggage, but it required twenty-five passenger tickets to send the

tent in the baggage car. Since the passenger trains ran on more reliable schedules than freight trains, it was imperative to use the baggage car to ship the tents, and often there were not twenty-five passengers to accompany the tent. The railroads never relented, and to the end the railroad expense continued to be one of the most expensive operational costs for the Chautauqua.

The War Years

On April 6, 1917, the United States entered World War I, and at first the Swarthmore Chautauqua had a difficult time getting its circuits on the road. Crew members and talent joined the rush to enlist or to get defense jobs, and many of the programs had to be cancelled at the last minute. But despite the confusion Paul Pearson managed to mount three summer circuits and two Festival circuits in that year. They played 387 towns in thirteen states.

Early in the war several of the owner-managers of the circuit Chautauquas met to see what could be done by circuit Chautauqua to further the war effort. Those who met were Charles F. Horner, Harry P. Harrison, Keith Vawter, Louis Alber, and Paul Pearson. Harry Harrison accepted the chairmanship of a Speaker's Bureau for the Red Cross, and he formed a committee of other Chautauqua managers that undertook the task of using the Chautauqua platform to keep the American people informed and to educate them for the realities of war, most especially in the food program.

In spite of, and perhaps because of, the war, the Swarthmore Chautauqua flourished. In 1917 and 1918, the War Years, it showed a profit of $319 and $7,054 respectively. Much of Paul Pearson's effort was devoted to war work, and he served in any way that would not violate his Quaker principles.

The Chautauqua owner-managers, together with the Y.M.C.A. and the Klaw Theatre chain, took over the job of entertaining troops in camp under the auspices of the War Department's Commission for Training-Camp Activities. The Chautauqua managers invented what they called a "Smileage" campaign for the soldiers. Books of tickets were sold to the American public at the cost of five cents per ticket that could be sent to a soldier in camp. Each ticket was good for admission to a program that was set up in the camp. If the camp had a hall, the program was presented in it. If it did not, then two or more of the big Chautauqua tents were put together to make one mammoth tent, and the programs were presented for the soldiers in these tents. The work was so successful that President Wilson wrote a letter of appreciation to the Chautauqua managers for their efforts.

During the War an emergency tax was passed placing a federal tax on admission to all kinds of entertainment. Much to

the horror of the Chautauqua managers they found themselves included. Paul Pearson marshalled the forces of the managers and headed a committee that was successful in having Chautauqua exempted from the tax on the ground that it was education rather than entertainment. It was a victory for circuit Chautauqua and managed to keep alive the belief that it was an educational movement primarily, even though the meaning of "educational" was never very carefully defined.

The Peak Year of the Swarthmore Chautauqua--1920

In 1920 the Swarthmore Chautauqua played to 547 towns in fourteen states and Canada. It had three summer circuits and four Festival circuits. It made a profit of $53,225. In later years it would expand into more circuits and into more towns and perhaps to reach more people, but in 1920 the halo of success surrounded every activity of the Chautauqua. Chautauqua was the high point of summertime in the towns, villages, and hamlets across the country. The economy was good, and the people were prosperous. 1920 was the only year in which average income per town was higher than average expenses for all circuits during the lifetime of the Swarthmore Chautauqua.

Paul Pearson was firmly in control of the Chautauqua and had recently beaten down an effort from outside forces to turn the circuit Chautauqua movement into a forum for the Republican party. His concern was, and would remain, that the Chautauqua platform be open to all political persuasions and that it not be used for the propaganda of any single party.

During this year Paul Pearson attempted to strengthen the entire circuit Chautauqua movement by forming stronger ties among the owner-managers. He met only with partial success. They listened carefully and cooperated with him when he proposed money-saving ventures such as combining to produce the same plays at lower royalties than the single circuits could get alone, but when he suggested a merger into one super-Chautauqua circuit, his proposals fell on dead ears.

At this point in the life of the Chautauqua the future appeared rosy, and there was little to indicate that within ten years circuit Chautauqua would be dead.

The Declining Years

By 1922 the first commercial radio station had opened in Pittsburgh, and Henry Ford was mass-producing his Model T Fords. The equipment used by the Chautauqua was beginning to show the

effects of years of usage. The tents were patched, and the platforms needed repair. But Paul Pearson's system showed a profit that year, and he was hopeful. However, others were beginning to be uneasy about the future of an enterprise that was built almost entirely on the contract and the willingness of the town leaders to sign that contract year after year.

1923 was a year in which the Chautauqua showed a financial loss of $25,431, a loss that Paul Pearson attributed to the expansion of the Chautauqua and that he probably expected to recoup in the following year.

1923 was also the year in which Keith Vawter, the originator of circuit Chautauqua, decided to sell his circuits, a move that proved wise for him. However, Paul Pearson remained convinced that the Swarthmore Chautauqua could weather any adversities, and he continued to expand his enterprise.

By 1925 Paul Pearson had five summer circuits in operation, but the expansion had used up any possible profit so that the loss in 1924 was $42,970. But 1925 was a good season--the last one. The summer of 1925 produced a profit of $25,097 and lent a false sense that all was well.

Throughout the year of operations the format had changed little since its inception. The programs still consisted of lectures, bands, singing groups, impersonators, operettas, and trained animal acts. Drama was accepted everywhere, but the plays were becoming stereotyped.

By 1925 the automobile had become well-known in rural America, and the national campaign to build hard-surface roads was under way. The question could well be asked why the American public did not use these improved roads and better automobiles to travel in greater numbers to the Chautauquas. The answer lies in the realm of speculation, but it is evident that Americans preferred to use them to drive away from rather than toward the once-a-year Chautauqua. The cinema in the large town down the road was available year-round, and it was to these cinemas that the public chose to guide their automobiles. Perhaps the infinite variety of offerings on the screen made the sameness of the Chautauqua with its lectures, its bands, its singers, and its simple, unsophisticated plays vapid by comparison with the wonders that Hollywood was conjuring up for the people.

The death knell was ringing for Chautauqua, and most of the managers were listening intently. Paul Pearson appears to have heard it, but his conviction that Chautauqua was the educational and cultural salvation of the country stood in the way of his seeing that the days of his enterprise were numbered.

The Last Years

In 1926 and 1927 Paul Pearson attempted to cut his expenses by cutting the salaries of his talent. It was too little too late, however, and both years ended with the Swarthmore Chautauqua in the red.

During the summer of 1926 two of the larger circuit Chautauquas sold out, and it was clear that the astute businessmen were getting out of the field.

Paul Pearson tried two major methods to save his Chautauqua. The first was a plan to convert the Chautauqua to an adult education program that would operate only in the evening. To do this he needed financing, and he and Harry Harrison went to the J. P. Morgan Company. For several months they talked with the corporation, and finally reached an understanding that the Morgan Company would put up one million dollars to revitalize and revamp Chautauqua. However, when it came to signing the contract, both Pearson and Harrison discovered that the control of the Chautauqua would rest in the hands of the financiers, and they refused to sign.

The second plan was the organization of The National Community Foundation with S. Parkes Cadman, a nationally known clergyman as its President, and Paul Pearson as its operating Vice-President. The plan was to begin with the Swarthmore Chautauqua as the organization that would provide the educational and cultural values of the Foundation. Then communities would subscribe to a fund for cultural purposes at $750 per community. After subscription an educational supervisor would visit the community to ascertain its cultural activities and needs and begin the plans to bring them to fruition.

The National Community Foundation never did flourish. Reports of some of the supervisors are still in existence, and reports indicate that the response of the towns was half-hearted at best. Drama clubs were formed, one play presented, then folded. Social evenings for club members and friends were planned for Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and so forth, but the lack of interest in the communities apparently led to the demise of the Foundation.

The Chautauqua Dies

The 1927 season saw the end of the tent in most towns on the Swarthmore circuit. Most communities had built auditoriums, and the Chautauqua abandoned the tent for the comfort of the auditorium. But the program remained unchanged.

During the summer of 1928 several of the owner-managers talked of a merger, but nothing came of the talk.

By 1929 bookings had fallen off to such an extent that Paul Pearson's Board of Managers told him that the Chautauqua must go into receivership. However, the members of the Board felt that they must honor the commitments already made for the 1930 season, and they agreed to make an assignment to creditors, but to fulfill the contracts already signed.

On April 1, 1930, the Swarthmore Chautauqua Association made an assignment to creditors. The creditors agreed to allow the Chautauqua to fulfill its 1930 commitments and tried to salvage whatever could be saved. After April 1 Paul Pearson was no longer connected with the Swarthmore Chautauqua. The creditors took over the management of the Chautauqua and took whatever proceeds came in from the 1930 summer season.

DISCUSSION

At the inception of the study certain questions were postulated. While they were directed toward discovering what happened and why in the life of a specific adult education enterprise, the Swarthmore Chautauqua, they may also be pertinent questions that adult educators can ask themselves about their own enterprises. The questions appear to be valid questions, and the answers that follow pertain to the Swarthmore Chautauqua but may possibly stimulate thought in answering the same, or similar questions, in today's adult education enterprises.

1. What factors in the social, economic, and educational environment gave rise to the creation of the Swarthmore Chautauqua?

Paul Pearson perceived what in his mind was a need on the Eastern seacoast for what he conceived as the cultural and educational advantages of circuit Chautauqua. Other owner-managers had contended that the heavily-populated seacoast would not support circuit Chautauquas. Pearson convinced certain influential men to let him attempt the establishment of the Chautauqua Association of Pennsylvania, and by directing his efforts to the small towns and villages, rather than to the cities, he succeeded in creating a viable enterprise. The people of the small towns in that day were hungry for news, for ideas, for entertainment--the things that were readily available to the city-dweller--but the hardships of travel and the economic necessity to stay in the community to make a living made it impossible for them to travel to the cities in large numbers for the kind of lectures and entertainment that Paul Pearson brought to them. The educational climate was changing rapidly through the influence of John Dewey and his

followers, but the new developments affected mostly the school children, not the adults. The populace was, by today's standards, rather badly educated, but they still hungered for the kind of educational experience that they felt Chautauqua brought to them.

2. What needs did the Swarthmore Chautauqua meet?

It provided a once-a-year opportunity for the small town dwellers to feel that they were being brought abreast of the outside world with lectures, music, opera, and drama so that the sense of isolation was for a period removed. "Culture" was available on Main Street at a price that almost everyone could afford.

3. Did the institution constantly reassess the needs that gave rise to the founding, and are they still operative?

In the early stages Paul Pearson appears to have spent much time and effort on assessing the needs--real or apparent--of the communities in which he operated. He presented the best lecturers he could find. He introduced Junior Chautauqua for the benefit of both the youngsters and their parents. He introduced drama into the small towns. He introduced the Festival in an attempt to provide more than once-a-year contact with educational and cultural activities.

In later years he attempted to reassess methods and means on continuing his enterprise, but there is little evidence that he understood that the needs had changed as a result of World War I and technological advances. He kept trying to fit his original concept of Chautauqua to a changed time and environment.

4. Were the objectives of the institution at the time of its founding still relevant at the time of its maturity?

There has not been uncovered a clear statement of the objectives of the Swarthmore Chautauqua, and it is likely that no formal objectives were ever stated. However, in the opinion of the investigator, the answer to this question probably is a major reason that the Swarthmore Chautauqua failed. It appears that Paul Pearson formulated early in his career those things that he felt important for the cultural and educational development of the populace he served, and while he attempted to change the format of his offerings to adjust to the times, it is doubtful that he considered changing the basic offerings--the lectures, the music, and the "uplifting" drama. It seems as if he pondered only different methods of perpetuating the offerings of Chautauqua, but did not feel it necessary to re-evaluate his objectives in light of the changing environment.

5. Did scientific, technological, and educational advances overtake the institution at such a rate that it could not respond satisfactorily to the changes?

As has been pointed out, the invention of radio, long-distance telephone, moving pictures, and the vast improvements in roads and automobiles apparently removed the element of isolation from small communities in which circuit Chautauqua thrived. Between 1912 and 1930 even rail travel had improved in speed and comfort. Because of improved communications the level of sophistication in the small community had also risen, and the citizens were no longer so enthralled with the adventures of a lecturer who had travelled to foreign countries, as it was now possible for them to go to the local movie palace and travel via Hollywood to the remote corners of the world.

6. Could the institution adjust to these changes so as to survive, or did it have to be abandoned?

The Swarthmore Chautauqua was unable to adjust, and indeed it may have been impossible for any institution based on the lecture, light music, and the isolation of rural America in that period to survive or to turn new technological advances to its advantage. The Swarthmore Chautauqua was abandoned in 1930. Its place in adult education has been taken by many other institutions --the talking picture, radio, television, adult evening classes, special degree programs, centers for continuing education, lecture series, libraries, and even the modified old Mother Chautauqua.

7. How did the personality of the owner-manager, Paul M. Pearson affect the growth and later the death of the Swarthmore Chautauqua?

Paul M. Pearson was a man of great personal charm and strength of character. His ability to convince others that he was right and his ability to attract co-workers who remained loyal to him were his greatest assets in creating and managing his enterprise. The Swarthmore Chautauqua was a one-man creation that was successful as long as the environment and the social situation of the early twentieth century remained primarily rural and unsophisticated. Paul Pearson was eminently suited to running an enterprise that appealed to rural unsophisticates. He was a Quaker who tried to live a simple life himself, and he understood the people for whom his Chautauqua was created, and he felt it his mission in life to cater to their needs. When the environment changed drastically after World War I, the rural people changed with it. Paul Pearson probably did not change, and the values he cherished and that had attracted the pre-War populace no longer were applicable in the post-War world. His inability to compromise his own values and his inability to see that those values were no longer held seriously by large portions of the populace after the War contributed to the demise of his Swarthmore Chautauqua.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS

The Significance of the Swarthmore Chautauqua

The study has attempted to demonstrate by telling the story of one circuit Chautauqua that the movement was significant in the development of the United States to its present state. Certainly it can be claimed that Chautauqua was an important influence on the development of adult education in the country.

Chautauqua, perhaps most especially the Swarthmore Chautauqua, was a pioneer in what is today a nationwide participation in the education of adults. Chautauqua was a forerunner of summer schools, extension courses, and correspondence study.

Chautauqua provided the American public with a place to hear the issues of the day, and they spent the months after the Chautauqua had left town discussing and deliberating many of the political and social reforms that are today part of our national life.

The Swarthmore Chautauqua is a case in point that institutions arise from a need and perish when the need or the form of its satisfaction changes. Paul Pearson perceived that the people of the Eastern seacoast would respond to the same kind of education and entertainment that had been successful in the West and in the Midwest, and he created his enterprise in order to transplant geographically the Chautauqua format that had worked so well elsewhere. It flourished for several years but failed to respond to the changes in the environment brought about by the War and rapid technological advances.

Perhaps most significantly the demise of Chautauqua demonstrates the episodic nature of institutions of adult education. Adult education institutions appear to rise as a result of someone's perception of a need and to flourish as long as the need exists. When confronted with a change in the environment the management of the enterprise must either adapt to the change or perish. In the opinion of the investigator the rapid rise of centers for continuing education parallels the Chautauqua story. They were created in answer to a need, and today they flourish. They have, however, adapted a format that differs little from the basic format of Chautauqua, namely the bringing together of groups in one place for the purpose of listening to lectures and engaging in discussion. At present this seems to be a satisfactory response to the need.

It might also be pointed out that the Civilian Conservation Corps had a life cycle similar to the life cycle of circuit Chautauqua. It arose in response to a perceived need, flourished

for a while, and then disappeared. It may, however, have had a rebirth in the present-day Job Corps.

Perhaps, however, we can foresee to some extent the factors that are influencing the environment and that will change it so radically that the present-day methods will become obsolete in the not too distant future. Programmed instruction, the science of cybernetics, the invention of the picture-phone, and the long-distance linkage of computers seem to point to less and less need in the future for congregating to solve problems or to learn. For some time to come the social advantage of meeting in person with others may keep alive the need for the centers, but perhaps the future will bring new technologies that will make it possible for hundreds of individuals to confer with full sight and sound without their having to leave office or home. The possibility, even probability, already exists.

While we tend to regard the adult education institutions we have created as eternal, there is nothing sacred about an institution per se. When it has served its purpose and fulfilled its destiny, then it must yield to the inexorable pressure of time and progress.

SUMMARY

The problem was to present a history of the Swarthmore Chautauqua as an adult education enterprise. It is illustrative of the episodic nature of adult education enterprises. Certain questions were posed at the beginning of the study and answered at the end.

The study was conducted by investigating documents from many sources that have not previously been pulled together for a picture of the life of the Swarthmore Chautauqua. Several tape-recorded personal interviews were used to add to the documentation, and visits were made to towns where the Chautauqua played for the purpose of reading the reviews and talking to persons who attended the Chautauqua between 1912 and 1930.

In 1912 Paul M. Pearson founded The Chautauqua Association of Pennsylvania, later to change its name to the Swarthmore Chautauqua Association. He became one of the leaders in the circuit Chautauqua movement and is credited by historians as having been the owner-manager who placed more emphasis on education than any of the others.

During World War I Paul Pearson and the other managers worked diligently for the war cause and offered the facilities of Chautauqua to the government for the dissemination of information

to the American public. Paul Pearson invented the "Smileage Campaign" for the soldiers to provide entertainment for the troops during the War.

His was the first circuit Chautauqua to bring drama to the small communities in which drama had always been anathema to the church-going populace, a "cultural" feature that the other managers quickly adopted.

The changes in the social climate of the United States that were brought about by the War were soon reflected in the fortunes of circuit Chautauqua. It rose to its peak in attendance and profits in the early 1920's and began to decline as a marked influence on American life by 1925. The availability of other forms of education and entertainment brought about a decline in attendance and ticket sales, and by 1926 the Swarthmore Chautauqua was in serious trouble.

At first Paul Pearson refused to admit that the social forces at work might bring about the demise of his Chautauqua and refused to see that what he considered the beneficent influence of the circuit Chautauqua was no longer a potent force in American life. As it became increasingly apparent that circuit Chautauqua was passing from the scene, Paul Pearson made several attempts to change the format by moving out of tents into auditoriums, by founding the National Community Foundation, and by attempting to convert circuit Chautauqua to an evening program in colleges and universities.

None of his attempts succeeded, and in 1930 his Swarthmore Chautauqua went into receivership. By 1932 all of the circuit Chautauquas in this country had folded, and what the popular writers of the time had hailed as a permanent adult education institution had become only a memory in the minds of the American public.

The life cycle of the Swarthmore Chautauqua demonstrates the episodic nature of institutions of adult education. Adult education institutions appear to rise as a result of someone's perception of a need and to flourish as long as the need exists. When confronted with a change in the environment the management of the enterprise must either adapt to the change or perish.

TABLE I

YEAR	NUMBER OF CIRCUITS	NUMBER OF TOWNS	NUMBER OF FESTIVALS
1912	1	41	0
1913	1	127	1
1914	2	218	1
1915	3	250	1
1916	3	290	2
1917	3	387	2
1918	3	420	2
1919	3	460	2
1920	3	547	4
1921	4	725	4
1922	4	832	5
1923	5	907	5
1924	5	818	5
1925	5	987	5
1926	*	*	*
1927	*	*	*
1928	2	*	*
1929	5	*	*

* Data Not Available

The information in this table was taken from two sources: the first was a pamphlet published in 1920 by the Swarthmore Chautauqua Association giving these figures through 1920. The second source was Paul Pearson's notebooks, which were also used to check the accuracy of the figures in the pamphlet.

Circuits before 1928 were five and seven-day circuits. The circuits in 1928 and 1929 were four-day circuits.

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15. ABSTRACT (250 words max.)

Paul M. Pearson founded the Swarthmore Chautauqua Association in 1912 in response to what he felt was a need on the Eastern seacoast for the same kind of education and entertainment that had been so successful in the West and Midwest. The success of circuit Chautauqua was always limited to small towns and villages throughout the country.

During World War I the Swarthmore Chautauqua responded to the call to entertain troops in camp, a patriotic service that also had the advantage of exposing thousands to the Chautauqua pattern.

Unable to adapt the Chautauqua format to changing environmental patterns, Paul Pearson made several attempts to save his Chautauqua, but he seemed unable to reassess his basic objectives or to turn the tide of technological advance to his advantage.

The life cycle of the Swarthmore Chautauqua demonstrates the cyclic and episodic nature of institutions of adult education. Adult education institutions appear to rise as a result of someone's perception of a need and to flourish as long as the environment remains relatively stable. When confronted with a change in the environment, the management of the enterprise must either adapt to the change or perish.

16. RETRIEVAL TERMS (Continue on reverse)

	Chautauqua Paul M. Pearson Swarthmore Chautauqua life cycle adult educ. enterprise National Community Foundation		Chautauqua Association of Pennsylvania Smileage Campaign Junior Chautauqua Educational Institutions

17. IDENTIFIERS

Figure 3. ERIC Document Resume